DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 154 131 CE 015 078

AUTHOR Adelman, Stanley I.; Ciminillo, Lewis
TITLE Career Education and Identity Status.
PUB DATE 28 Mar 78
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (Toronto, Canada, March 28, 1978); Not available in hard copy due to reproducibility problems

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Comparative Analysis; Developmental Stages; Educational Research; High School Students; *Self Concept; Senior High Schools; *Seniors; Student Development; *Vocational Development

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to analyze the relationship between the availability of a comprehensive career education program and the development of ego identity by high school seniors. Marcia's continuum of identity development with its four stages (identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement) was used in combination with interview techniques to compare students in a district with a fully developed career education program and students in a district without a formal career education program. Thirty students randomly selected from the senior class in each district were interviewed by six university students trained in Marcia's procedures. Tapes of the interviews were then reviewed by two university professors similarly trained. Since the results did not support the hypothesis that school systems with a formal program significantly increased the vocational identity status of students, outside factors, such as the fact that both schools had strong counseling programs, had to be considered. As a check on these factors, a comparison was made with the results of a study performed on college freshmen by Waterman and Waterman (using similar methodology) which concentrated on ideological identity. Career education, it was concluded, has been too narrowly defined as preparation for work rather than as a part of a full program of personal development including political and ideological awareness. (EG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED154131

CAREER EDUCATION AND IDENTITY STATUS

Stanley I. Adelman
Lewis Ciminillo

AERA
March 28, 1978
Session 10

CE 015078

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Stanley I. Adelman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CAREER EDUCATION AND IDENTITY STATUS

Stanley I. Adelman
Lewis Ciminillo

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the availability of a comprehensive career education program and the development of ego-identity by high school seniors. Marcia's (1964, 1966) continuum of identity development was used to compare students in a school with a fully developed career education program, and students in school without a formal program in career education. The investigators' initial prediction, that career education would result in a higher level of identity development, was based on the premise that the kind of preparation for adult life provided in career education programs would enhance adolescents' development of occupational identity.

Career Education

Traditionally, education has been the instrument of society of initiating the young into its established structures and institutions, but this function is no longer adequate by itself. Consequently, a new concept of career education has become a primary issue in education. Generally, this concept is based on the recognition that change is a major factor in modern life and individuals must be prepared for changes as well as for roles in adult life. At least in theory, the traditional dichotomy between academic preparation and vocational training is rejected. Work is viewed as a part of life for everyone, and career education programs attempt to increase student awareness of the choices and decisions they will be facing throughout their lifetime.

Wolfbein (1967) pointed out over a decade ago that an individual entering the work force at the age of 20 can expect to make six or seven job changes before he reaches retirement. Going to college, once considered a career path in itself, is no longer a guarantee of stability, and may not even have a clear

relationship to career development, as a recent NIE survey (1976) of college students who graduated in 1969 suggests. Berg (1970) has extensively explored the discrepancy between education and work attainment. These studies suggest a paradox to be confronted by programs in a comprehensive version of career education. The relationship between work and education must be made clearer at the same time that future career opportunities are becoming difficult to define. The answer to this paradox, it seems, is an emphasis on total social development; that is, career education is viewed as education for life, with concepts of work related to all other aspects of mature responsibility and choice which are a part of adult functioning.

This broad conceptualization of career education is widely reflected in the current literature as, for example, in Baily and Stadt's (1973) definition of career development as "a developmental, continuously interactive process which progresses from infancy through adulthood like an expanding spiral." They list the "domains" of career development as including, besides work attitudes and values, concepts of self, educational and economic skills, and interpersonal relationships. Career planning that begins in adolescence should be made with the understanding that it is the beginning of a lifelong process, which should allow for personal choice and expansion of opinions (Tiedeman, 1971).

Erikson's Model of Adolescent Development

Erikson (1968) proposed a model of adolescent development that is highly relevant to current concepts of career education. Erikson characterizes adolescence as a period of "moratorium for the integration of identity elements." The individual is coping simultaneously with the problems of coming to terms with the demands of his society, earning the respect of his peers, finding reliable guidance, and fulfilling the "desire to make something work." During

adolescence, youth may undergo two crucial experiences: "crisis" and "commitment" (Marcia, 1966). Crisis is a period of active engagement with alternatives and choice. It is "a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential and, therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment." Commitment, on the other hand, is a relatively stable condition in which the individual's energy is available for action. Commitment may or may not be the result of a crisis experience.

In Erikson's model, the adolescent experience is closely related to social roles and expectations as the maturing individual seeks both a place in the economic structure and a governing philosophy of life. Those who have special aptitudes can, according to Erikson, more easily integrate themselves into adult society than their peers. The majority, however, having less well defined competencies, tend to emphasize the development of an explicit ideology: "...the adolescent mind becomes a more explicity ideological one, by which we mean one searching for some inspiring unification of tradition or anticipated techniques, ideas, and ideals." Thus, in Erikson's view, ideological concerns tend to precede occupational ones in most adolescents' experience, although the two are interrelated in significant ways.

Marcia's Continuum of Identity Achievement

Based on this conceptualization of identity growth in adolescence, Marcia (1964, 1966) derived a continuum of identity development marked by four stages: (1) identity diffusion (characterized by lack of commitment to choices relating to occupation and/or belief, and lack of crisis), (2) foreclosure (characterized by the avoidance of crisis with commitment based usually on parental beliefs), (3) moratorium (the period of crisis as alternatives and choices are actively confronted), and (4) identity achievement (personally realized commitment to occupational and/or ideological choices).

Using a structured interview technique to determine identity status of college freshmen, Marcia looked for relationships between this variable and

cognitive performance, level of aspiration, authoritarianism and stability of self esteem, factors which could enter into a composite picture of ego identity development. He found the subjects high in identity achievement performed better on cognitive tasks, set realistic goals, and had strong ego-identity. The moratorium group was characterized mainly by variability in concept attainment performance, and resemblance to the identity achievement group on other measures. The foreclosure group, in many ways the least auspicious of the four, demonstrated subscription to authoritarian values, vulnerable self esteem, poor performance on concept attainment tasks, and persistence at unrealistic levels of aspiration. The identity diffusion group could not be clearly characterized by the measures used, perhaps because of wide variability within this group.

Waterman and Waterman (1971), using Marcia's status continuum and interview techniques to assess the development of ego identity during the first year of college, found different patterns of development depending upon whether they looked at occupational or ideological identity status. Specifically they found that a positive shift in developmental status occurred in relation to occupational identity, while a retrogressive shift occurred in relation to ideology. This finding, which seems to contradict Erikson's conceptualization of the primacy of ideological concerns among youth, is explained as a possible reflection of contemporary American values which emphasize economic functioning. For these students, occupational concerns seemed to assume precedence over ideological interests. Their findings also disclosed that more than 75 percent of the freshmen changed status in one or both areas during the year, indicating a tendency toward revision of choices among college freshmen in general.

Rationale

This study uses Marcia's construct and relates its underlying concepts to the principle of career education for life. Assuming that occupational choice is an important part of identity development, and that self-knowledge and

knowledge of the world of work are complementary, the investigators predicted that exposure to a fully developed career education program would result in a higher level of occupational ego-identity. The major purpose of this investigation, then, was to compare the identity development of students in a school system with a comprehensive career education program (experimental group) with that of students in a system without a formal program in career education (control group).

Two districts were selected on the basis of their close similarity on factors other than the presence or absence of a career education program. Table I shows how the districts compared on the factors selected.

Table I

A Demographic Comparison of the Experimental and Control Districts

	Experimental District		Control District
	School A	School B	
Number of Students	1412	1321	1445
Per Pupil expenditure	$1195		$1218
Percent going to post-secondary institution	43%	39%	42%
Student/Counselor ratio	355/1	347/1	366/1
Type of Community	Rural/light industry		rural/light industry

The career education program in the experimental district is part of a systemwide program in grades K through 12. In this program, considered a model in the state, career education is integrated into the regular curriculum at all levels and in all subject matter classes. The school system also has a large career developmental center and provides ongoing inservice training for teachers and career education directors. By contrast, the control district has no organized career education program. It has a traditional guidance program primarily devoted to setting up schedules and getting students into post-secondary

education. It is considered to be a strong program, however, with a variety of information available to students seeking it on an individual basis.

Thirty students were randomly selected from the senior class of each district to constitute the experimental (n=30) and control (n=30) groups. A table of random numbers was used in each selection. Students were assumed to be comparable on the basis of the similarity of the two districts (see Table 1). To conduct the interview, six upper level university students with course work in Human Growth and Development and Adolescent Psychology were trained in Marcia's procedures. They were not informed of the purpose of the study. These interviewers taped a total of 60 interviews in the schools, of which 7 were later discarded from the study because of poor audio quality or a lack of reviewer consensus on interpretation. The tapes were coded to conceal the identity of the district in which the interview was held, and then these tapes were reviewed by two university professors trained in the Marcia procedures. In all, 53 assessments (26 experimental, 27 control), on which both professors were in complete agreement, were made.

Results

Table II

A Comparison of the Experimental and Control Districts on Marcia's Occupational Identity Status

	Experimental District	Control District
Identity Achievement	4	8
Moratorium	11	4
Foreclosure	2	1
Diffusion	9	14
	26	27

$X^2 = 5.91$ df = 3 $p = > .10$

There was no significant difference between the school systems on occupational identity status. The scores for individual status show that the experimental group tended to be high at the moratorium level and the control at the identity achievement level, but the latter was also higher identity diffusion. None of these differences was statistically significant. When the data are collapsed to test the crisis variable, the experimental district has more students in the crisis group, but again the difference is not significant, as shown in Table III.

Table III

A Condensed Marcia Occupational Identity Status Comparison of the Experimental and Control Districts

	Experimental District	Control District
Crisis	15	12
No Crisis	11	15
	26	27

$X^2 = 1.21$ df = 1 $p = > .10$

Discussion

Overall, the data indicate no strong evidence in favor of career education as a vehicle for developing positive occupational identity according to Marcia's model. The study does not support the hypothesis that school systems with a formal program in career education do a better job of increasing the vocational identity status of students than do schools without career education programs. This result could have occurred for any of a number of reasons of which two seem especially salient:

1. Career education is not helpful in increasing the identity status of high school students; or

2. The similarities between the experimental and control school systems, particularly the fact that both had strong counselling programs, were more important than the program difference selected as the focus of this study. In other words, identity status development may be affected more by counselling or some other factor than career instruction in the classroom.

As a check on outside factors, the investigators decided to compare their results with those of Waterman and Waterman (1971) to see how their beginning college subjects compared with the subjects used in this study to investigate the effect of time. Because the crisis is related to whether or not a student is at moratorium or achievement levels in occupational identity (diffusion and foreclosure either precede or preclude crisis), scores were compared on this basis (Table IV). High school students were compared with college freshmen at the time of the latter's initial (fall) interview, indicating their status before they had experienced their first year in college. In this way, it was felt, differences in educational experiences were minimized.

Table IV

Occupational Identity

	Waterman and Waterman	Ciminillo and Adelman
Crisis	22	27
No Crisis	55	26

$X^2 = 6.64$ df = 1 $P > .01$

According to this comparison, the high school students interviewed in the present study were significantly more likely to have experienced a crisis period than the college freshmen interviewed by Waterman and Waterman. This finding lends credence to the view that the schools in this study were unusually effective

in increasing the occupational identity status of students regardless of whether or not career education instruction was provided in the classroom.

To further explore the relationship between high school and college students in identity development, the investigators compared scores on ideological identity. The results of this comparison are shown in Table V.

Table V

Ideological Identity

	Waterman and Waterman	Ciminillo and Adelman
Crisis	28	8
No Crisis	52	45

$X^2 = 6.31$ df = 1 $P > .05$

Again, the comparison shows a significant difference; this one, however, is in favor of the college students, who were proportionately more likely to have experienced ideological crisis.

The relatively low number of high school students who had experienced ideological crisis is especially interesting in view of the fact that they were tested in the fall of 1976, the bicentennial year, when there was considerable emphasis on political awareness in the schools. Many, moreover, became eligible to vote for the first time in a presidential election. These factors might have been expected to increase performance on the ideological dimension. On the contrary, however, the majority were at diffusion or foreclosure stages.

We are aware that these results, while statistically significant, must be viewed with some caution. Our subjects are not from a population identical to taht from which Waterman and Waterman's subjects came. Nevertheless, at a minimum we believe that our findings show the need for replication of this study with a population more identical to that used in Waterman and Waterman is necessary. Beyond this minimum we find it hard to believe that our significance

is entirely due to the lack of identity between our populations; we prefer to believe that the times have changed, as well.

Conclusion

The study raises important questions regarding the concept of career Education, at least as it is operationalized in the experimental district. While both systems in the study seemed to be doing an adequate job of promoting career awareness, with or without a fully developed career education program, political awareness among high school seniors appeared to fall short of expectations.

The picture drawn here implies that career awareness is still separated in the curriculum from other kinds of awareness necessary for mature functioning in life. More than half of the students interviewed showed functional maturity in occupational identity, while only 15 percent had reached crisis in political or religious identity. It may be, then, that career education is still being too narrowly defined as preparation for work instead of being integrated into a full program of personal development. While successful entry and maintenance in a democratic society involves other important factors too, notably the ability to understand political issues, develop soundly based political convictions, and actively support these convictions through the various opportunities a democratic system provides. Career education that does not enable students to relate all aspects of adult social functioning to each other, and thus form an integrated concept of mature responsibilities and rights, falls short of the concept of career education as education for life.

This study suggests the need for schools to emphasize adult life preparation, including the development of political awareness and ideological decisions, rather than focus more narrowly on career preparation as the main concern of adult life. This recommendation is in keeping with the spirit if not the implementation of current ideals in career education. A narrowly conceived concept

of career education, on the other hand, may become counter-productive if its language creates too limited a focus on economic functioning. In a country where many young adults vote before they hold full time jobs, the educational system had better insure that they are prepared to make informed choices which are important to them.

References

Baily, L. J. and R. Stadt, Career Education: New approaches to human development, McKnight Publishing Co., 1973.

Berg, I., Education and Jobs: The great training robbery, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.

Colleges get mixed grades on job preparation, in NIE Information, quarterly newsletter, Winter, 1976, p. 6.

Erikson, E. H. Identity: Youth and crisis. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968.

Marcia, J. Determination and construct validity of ego identity status. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1964.

Marcia, J., Development and validity of ego-identity status, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3:5, 1966, p.p. 551-558.

Marland, S. P., Jr., Career Education Now, Address given at the Convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Houston, Texas, January 23, 1971.

Tiedeman, D. V., The Agony of Choice: Guidance for Career Decisions. In R.C. Pucinski and S. P. Hirsch (eds), The Courage to Change: New Directions For Career Education. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1971, pp. 121-130.

Waterman, A. and C. A. Waterman, A Longitudinal Study of Changes in Ego Identity Status During the Freshman Year at College, Developmental Psychology, 5:1, 1971, pp.167-173.

Wolfbein, S. L. Education and Training for Full Employment, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977.

M A R C I A I D E N T I T Y C O N S T R U C T

	Crisis	Commitment
Role Diffusion	NO	NO
Foreclosure	NO	YES
Moratorium	YES	NO
Identity Achievement	YES	YES